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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 002194

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION GOES TO DECISIVE
ROUND THREE; GOVERNMENT FORMATION TO FOLLOW

REF: A. ANKARA 2145

[1](#)B. ANKARA 2133

Classified By: PolCouns Janice G. Weiner, reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary and Comment: Turkey remains on track to election FM Abdullah Gul as its new president on Tuesday, August 28. The swearing in will take place at parliament the same evening at 6 pm local. Assuming nothing derails the presidential process, Justice and Development Party (AKP) chairman and PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan will present his proposed cabinet list to the new president on August 29; AKP will read its already-penned government program to parliament on September 1 and expects to have the government in place with a vote of confidence by September 6. Although the opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) continues to boycott at every turn, this will finally give everyone some breathing room and a chance to get back to business after a long and difficult political season. End summary and comment.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Despite Kemalists' misgivings, CHP's continued boycott of the presidential election process and various threats of judicial action, FM Gul is expected to be elected by simple majority (276 votes required) on August 28 in the third round of presidential balloting. Today's second round (in which a two-thirds vote of 367 was required) was again inconclusive, with Gul garnering 337 votes.

[1](#)3. (U) The formal swearing in is currently scheduled for the evening of August 28 at 6 pm local time. Members of the diplomatic corps have been invited to attend the ceremony, which will take place at parliament. Turkish General Staff Chief General Buyukanit demurred when asked if he would be at parliament that day, saying that it was still too early and his schedule for Tuesday was not yet clear.

[1](#)4. (C) Erdogan has checked his cabinet list at least twice and is prepared to present it to the new president on August [1](#)29. Party insiders seem no more sure of the list's composition than media speculators. Vice chair Edibe Sozen, reputed contender for a state minister position, told us, "We will all be surprised when the list is announced." Gul - for form's sake and as an indication of independence (which commentators will not take seriously), may ask that at least a couple of ministers be changed out. The plan is to read the government program - long since written - to parliament on September 1, then have the vote of confidence no later than September 6.

15. (SBU) With a new president and government finally in place, Turks - including especially their political class - will take off the Ramadan holiday and have the first chance to catch their collective breath since April. The new parliament is expected to reconvene October 1, the traditional date, to take up AKP's program, including ambitious constitutional reform.

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